

CAREER FOCUS

What does the Transition Assistance Program offer?

**BY MASTER SGT.
DAVID HALVORSON**

TEAM KIRTLAND career assistance advisor

Whether through separation or retirement, everyone will leave the active duty force at some time. Although the focus of *my* Air Force speciality is retention of qualified Air Force personnel, I'd like to offer some advice to those planning to leave active duty.

You needn't face the journey alone!

This week let's take an inside look at one of the most powerful tools available to service members preparing for the exciting—and somewhat scary—transition to the private sector. The tool in question is known as the Transition Assistance Program—or TAP!

The Transition Assistance Program is designed to help retiring and separating servicemembers and their families make a smooth transition to the civilian work environment. It provides them with the resources to successfully search for employment as they exit the military and return to civilian life.

Some of the assistance that TAP provides includes: transition counseling and career planning, development of job search skills, computers with internet access, employment information and opportunities, a resource center, career assessment tools, resume assistance and access to job banks.

The three-day TAP Seminar also offers a Veterans Affairs Benefits and Entitlements presentation where members meet with a VA representative to discuss educational benefits, disability compensation and other VA benefits and entitlements—valuable information that you need to have!

Regardless of rank, most military members find that TAP is indispensable to a successful transition from a military life style. It's free and it will open your eyes to the world that awaits you after service to our great nation.

Don't pass up your chance to take advantage of this great opportunity.

Of course TAP is just one of many valuable programs offered through the Kirtland AFB Family Support Center. For more information on Air Force Transition Assis-



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tance visit the Air Force Transition Assistance home page at www.afpc.randolph.af.mil/transition/trans.htm or call the Kirtland FSC at 846-0741.

Doors open for active duty to join Reserve

The Air Force is opening doors and modifying programs to give people leaving active duty an opportunity to continue their military careers in the Air Force Reserve.

As the active force tries to reduce manning by about 16,600, the Air Force Reserve is seeking to hire many of those experienced Airmen and give them a more flexible way to have a career in the military.

"This is an excellent opportunity for prior-service people on active duty to join our Reserve programs," said Col. Francis Mungavin, director of recruiting service at Air Force Reserve Command headquarters. "Our people are making every effort to ensure that all potential candidates are aware of their release options."

Current Air Force manning numbers are beyond the authorized end-strength of 359,300 airmen on active duty. The new force shaping program has scheduled active duty numbers to drop by 3,900 officers and 12,700 enlisted by Sept. 15.

"The force shaping program initiative that will have the greatest impact on us will be the expanded application of the PALACE CHASE program," said Lt. Col. Dirk Palmer at AFRC's recruiting service. "We expect that Airmen in all Air Force specialty

codes will be eligible to apply for PALACE CHASE with a minimum of two years in service."

PALACE CHASE is a program for Airmen to transition off active duty by trading their active duty service commitments for Air Force Reserve service commitments.

"PALACE CHASE is not a new program," said Chief Master Sgt. Susan Allick, chief of the PALACE CHASE program at the Air Force Personnel Center at Randolph AFB, Texas. "The program has just eased requirements for the force shaping program."

To qualify for this program, applicants must have a reenlistment code approved for continued military service and meet all the PALACE CHASE eligibility criteria under the force shaping rules.

Applications under these new rules are being accepted until March 12. To be approved, applicants must separate from active duty May 15-Sept. 15. Though the normal application process is 7-8 weeks, under the new rules, officials at AFPC expect to be able to notify applicants of their results within four to six weeks.

"We'll be working on a first-come, first-served basis," Chief Allick said. "With the restrictions loosened up on active duty service commitments, we expect to pro-

cess a lot of applications."

Though people in all specialty codes are eligible to apply for the PALACE CHASE transfers to the Air Force Reserve, Airmen must have graduated from their initial training, qualified as 3-levels and not be scheduled to be retrained. Some U.S. Air Force Academy graduates may be approved for the program. Air Force ROTC cadets may apply to be commissioned directly into Air Force Reserve jobs for six-year commitments, instead of the typical four-year tour of active duty.

"With individual mobilization augmentee end-strength sitting at 94.8 percent, this is a great opportunity to fill some of our current vacancies," said Lt. Col. Nancy Robinson, director of assignments at Air Reserve Personnel Center headquarters in Denver. "We're trying to pull out the stops and make the transition from the active duty to the Reserve as smooth as possible."

Individual mobilization augmentees are reservists assigned part-time to active duty units, backfilling or deploying when required. Being an IMA is a flexible way to be in the Air Force, serving a minimum of 12 days throughout the year and two weeks of annual tour each year. Just like traditional unit reservists, the president may mobilize IMAs

during wartime or contingency operations; however, IMAs are assigned directly to active duty units instead of Reserve squadrons.

"We're trying to be proactive and take the Air Force's overages," Colonel Palmer said. "If we have a qualified person, we'll do everything we can to sign them up in the Air Force Reserve."

Anyone interested in finding out more about the program should first go through Separations, located in the Mission Support Squadron and then contact the Kirtland AFB in-service recruiter. During out-processing from active duty, meeting with the in-service recruiter is a required stop.

"The purpose of the appointment is to find out if joining the Air Force Reserve is a viable option for the separating Airmen, enlisted or officer," Colonel Palmer said.

To find out more about the PALACE CHASE program contact Staff Sgt. Brian Cyr, Personnel Relocations and Employment, at 846-5702.

For more information about joining the Air Force Reserve, visit www.afreserve.com. To speak to the Albuquerque Air Force Reserve recruiter, call Master Sgt. Vera Romano at 846-0544. For information and to speak to an Air National Guard recruiter, call 846-6499.

NUCLEUS

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FORUM

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Disappointed about wrong information

I read the article concerning the display of the POW/MIA flag on a daily basis at the NCO Academy and other locations in the Jan. 16 Nucleus. Being a retired noncommissioned officer, I am disappointed that the individual at the NCO Academy did not know under what authority they display the POW/MIA flag on a daily basis.

If a unit or a detail is going to display or perform a flag detail, they should be fully aware of the authority to display the flag and the proper honors to be performed.

I am wondering what is being taught at the NCO Academy, especially when a simple question is asked concerning a flag they are displaying in front of their facility.

It is unfortunate that a member of the NCO Academy staff responded incorrectly to a query on the POW/MIA flag issue. Rest assured, Kirtland AFB's fine NCO Academy adheres strictly to all policy and guidance found within Air Force instructions.

In this one instance, though, our NCO Academy staff only provided the exact flag protocol reference after the fact.

That said, my personal observations lead me to conclude there is no doubt that those who are privileged to attend the Kirtland NCO Academy are receiving first-class leadership and training as part of the most respected enlisted professional military education program in the world.

We are proud to have them as valued members of TEAM KIRTLAND.

Energy saving idea

The decision was made in September to keep all computers on 24 hours a day, seven days a week in order to get the most current updates for security.

While I do not disagree with the concept of security, I would like to have the Information Assurance Office reconsider allowing people to shut off their monitors overnight and at times when the computer will not be used for a while, like an hour or more.

Not all computer systems have their "Energy Star" sleep mode activated which further wastes electrical energy.

Even with sleep mode there are



COL. HENRY L. ANDREWS, JR.
377th Air Base Wing commander

about five watts of electrical energy being used. I estimated in a recent survey that there are 4,325 monitors on the Air Force side, 25 percent of which are not in sleep mode. This is a considerable amount of electrical energy being used needlessly.

The Information Assurance Office could also encourage turning the "Energy Star" setting on all electronic equipment.

Great suggestion. Security of our base network is critical, but we must also be good stewards of taxpayer dollars and our environment. So, our Communications Division team has already taken action on this suggestion. This includes systematic replacement of our older desktop computers in the 377th Air Base Wing with "Energy Star" compliant machines.

Then, in collaboration with TEAM KIRTLAND's cadre of computer work group managers, we have distributed new guidance for base computer users to turn off computer monitors at the end of the duty day and when away from the work station for extended periods.

While the challenge of changing habits is never easy, the pay-off is significant.

Thanks for going above and beyond

After reading the forum in the first three issues of the Nucleus this year I thought it was time to send in

something that is not a complaint, but praise. I am a 100 percent disabled veteran and my disabilities are not noticeable.

The Sunday before Thanksgiving we were on base looking at the used RV's on the vehicle sales lot on base when a young Airman let me know my front left tire was very low. I tried airing it up with the air hose at the wash bays, but only let more air out as the air lines were frozen. It was a very cold and windy day.

The Airman said he would change it for me. I thanked him and said I would call my auto club, but he insisted so I said OK and I would get the tools out he needed. As I started to do this I found the wing nuts too tight for me to loosen, so he proceeded to get the tools and put my spare on the left front.

While he did this we talked, I found out his first name and that he was a staff sergeant in the munitions.

When he finished I, asked if I could treat him to lunch, he declined. Then I ask if he would join us for Thanksgiving dinner. I said I knew how it was being away from home during the holidays. He told me he was having some of the people that lived in the barracks over to his house off base joining him for Thanksgiving dinner.

I thanked him and left to join my wife and her daughter who had walked to the BX.

It was very nice to see that there are still military personnel that not only do their duties, but go above and beyond to help others.

I saw him at Autopride a few days later, and at that time, I took notice of his nametag. At this time I want to thank Staff Sgt. Matthew Traxler again and all the others in the military that go above and beyond.

Thank you for taking the time to recognize Sergeant Traxler. We too, are very proud of his selfless actions. He represents the highest standards of service before self.

The 898th Munitions Squadron commander has personally thanked Sergeant Traxler for taking the time to be a truly superb Air Force citizen.

Frustrating system

I am calling about my frustration with the hospital answering system.

I can't talk to the patient advocate. I can't talk to my primary care manager. I can't get anybody to return my call.

If you can figure out what is going on with the phone system, please call me.

Thank you for calling the Forum with your concerns. Our medical

team has made significant changes to the telephone appointment system to make sure we meet your needs.

We have added new menu options that will put you directly in touch with the patient advocate, will enable you to speak to some clinics directly and leave messages for your primary care manager. When you have questions about TRICARE or health benefits, you can now access those offices without waiting to be transferred.

We apologize for your extended wait on the phone.

We even have given our patient advocate a cell phone to ensure we can address urgent issues in a timely fashion. This is just another example of our outstanding medical professionals going the distance for the best health care possible.

Unsung heroes

Please tell us a bit about Kirtland AFB's utilities branch. We don't hear much about their mission.

The Civil Engineering Utilities Branch and the members of this team are an important part of keeping Kirtland AFB running.

The Utilities Branch is responsible for water, sewer, and gas distribution, not to mention the operation and maintenance of our water wells and high-voltage electrical system.

This highly dedicated crew goes above and beyond every day to ensure all of Kirtland AFB has the water, gas, and electricity necessary live, work, and play.

Hats off to these unsung heroes.

Forum

We want your suggestions and comments concerning Kirtland AFB.

However, may we also suggest giving base agencies or the chain of command the chance to resolve your concern before calling Forum.

If you decide the Forum is the right answer, we don't print callers' names.

Customer service

Chapel, 846-5691
CE Help Desk, 846-8222
Commissary, 846-9586
Computer help, 846-5926
Energy wasting, 846-4633
Exchange Service, 266-9887
Family Services, 846-0741
Finance, 846-8045, 846-6639
Law Enforcement, 846-7926
Legal Services, 846-4217
Medical Clinic, 846-3406
Services Squadron, 846-1828

Write: 377 ABW/CC Forum
2000 Wyoming SE
Kirtland AFB, NM 87117